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THE LEAF-RAMSAY THEORY OF THE TROJAN WAR

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Two typical statements in Dr. Leaf's *Troy* are: (p. 13) "I can feel no doubt that the *Iliad* is based on a very solid foundation of historical fact"; and (p. 327), "The whole situation described in the *Iliad* is absolutely in accord with the inferences which are to be drawn from geography on the one hand and the ruins of Hissarlik on the other."

True, but there is a leading conclusion reflected in *Troy* which we regard as a fallacy, and to test this is the purpose of the present article. To make a few additional extracts: "Troy could not be besieged, or effectually invested with the forces at their [the Greeks] command, but it might be starved or impoverished by cutting off the source of its wealth. Even to do this would require the combined effort of the whole of Greece. But the cause was a common one; pressure from the north was making expansion towards the east a matter of life and death to Greece" (p. 316). Again: "The argument then is briefly this. Given the known data—the Hellespont an essential economic necessity to Greece, but blocked by a strong fort, and the expansion of Greece to the Euxine at the beginning of the historical period—there must have been a point at which that fort was taken by the Greeks. And it must have been taken in the way which Homer describes. . . . A war of Troy is therefore a logical deduction" (p. 326). Further: "The ostensible cause of war is almost always some point of honour; the ultimate cause is, almost without exception, economic" (p. 328). And: "It is no degradation to Homer to find behind the poems a struggle for trade" (p. 329). Hence we infer that Dr. Leaf believes that "the chief object" of that war was "to win the trade" of the Euxine (p. 326). This also, we take it, is the view of Sir W. M. Ramsay. In an article which appeared about eight years before Dr. Leaf's *Troy*, in the *Classical Review* (XVIII, No. 3 [1904],

p. 165 ff.), Sir William states: "Till one sees Troy one hardly realizes to how great a degree its significance for the Greeks lay in its position guarding the path to the Black Sea. It must be won by the Greeks before they could sail freely up the Euxine and their history could enter on a new era. It had been the key to open to them the new world; and on that account the scene of the great Greek epic was necessarily laid there by the national consciousness" (p. 166). That article materially influenced Dr. Leaf, as he duly refers to it and fully indorses it.

If this was the object of the Trojan War, then the essential result of that war was the realization of that object, otherwise there would be no force in their conclusion; no "new era," no "new world," hence "no national consciousness," in short, no incentive to "lay the scene of the great Greek epic" at Troy. And if their argument stands upon a logical foundation, such a result, it would appear, must have followed as a logical sequence to that war, within a reasonable time, as the lawyers would say. If centuries elapsed between the close of that war and "Greek expansion to the Euxine," the natural conclusion is that causes independent of that war evolved that expansion.

The Leaf-Ramsay theory is indeed novel and ingenious, but the writer finds no warrant for it in Homer, in Greek tradition, or in Greek history.

Dr. Leaf of course upholds in large measure the historical character of the Homeric poems, and in the work referred to invokes their authority. Our first appeal is therefore to Homer, while the Ionians, Herodotus, Thucydides, the Athenian dramatists, and modern criticism are briefly referred to.

The Homeric princes were, as historically mirrored in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, a knightly race. A parallel in some important respects is furnished in the incontestably real mediaeval times of chivalry. Surely the wars of chivalry in the Middle Ages, as some of the crusades were in a sense, were not due to any of Dr. Leaf's "economic causes." Sir Walter Scott says: "Chivalry began to dawn in the end of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century. It blazed forth with high vigor during the crusades, which indeed may be considered as exploits of national knight-errantry, or

general wars undertaken on the very same principles which actuated the conduct of individual knights adventurers."¹ Instances of non-economic wars could be multiplied. And we are so simple as to believe that the Trojan War was a chivalrous one for the reason expressed in A, and substantially for no other. ". . . thee thou shameless one followed we hither to make thee glad, by earning recompense at the Trojan's hands for Menelaos and for thee, thou dog-face," exclaims Achilles to the King of men.²

"Holy Ilios" had been "laid low" by "the sons of the Achaiaans" long before there was any "Greek expansion to the Euxine." The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed long anterior to that development. That sea is not specified in Homer. His references to lands, peoples, or events having any relation to the Euxine are few and scant. For instance: he alludes in λ to "the land and the city of the Cimmerians shrouded in mist and cloud" as at "the limits of the world"; in μ to the ship Argo; in N to "the proud Hippemolgoi that drink mare's milk"; in the Trojan Catalogue, "Pylaimenes of shaggy heart led the Paphlagonians from the land of the Eneti, whence the breed of wild mules"; and in the next paragraph, "And the Alizones were from far away in Alybe where is the birthplace of silver"; as to the whereabouts of this latter region the ancients (see Strabo) were puzzled; Dr. Leaf believes it to border the Euxine east of the River Halys and he is probably correct. These Homeric references intimate to us no commerce or land which the Homeric Greeks might desire in the Pontic Zone; no collective Greek pioneering. But Dr. Leaf (p. 327) thinks that the voyage of the Argonaut vaguely implies such. There are of course grounds for treating, as we do, the story of the Argonaut as a pure fairy tale, like some others in the *Odyssey*. Heyne, while not denying its possibility, sees no basis of fact in this legend.³ Grote attributes its parentage to "epical fancy."⁴ And Andrew Lang refers to that voyage as pure *Märchen*, as "nothing historic."⁵

¹ *Essay on Chivalry*, sec. 3, p. 56. London: Warne, 1887.

² The excellent translations of Lang, Leaf, and Myers, and of Butcher and Lang of Homer and those of Jowett of Thucydides are generally used in this article.

³ *Observa ad Apollodor I*, 9, 16, p. 72.

⁴ *History of Greece*, chap. xiii.

⁵ *The World of Homer*, pp. 164-65.

Dr. Leaf sees (p. 296) upon the shores of the Black Sea a "rich and fertile land," as it certainly was naturally, which made the Greeks "eager to force the door to it." Hence the Trojan War. And what is his cardinal clue in Homer? These few lines which he quotes (p. 296) from B 851-58: "The shaggy heart of Pylaïmenes led the Paphlagonians from Eneti, whence comes the breed of wild mules; these are they that possessed Kytoros and inhabited Sesamon, and dwelt in famed homes about the river Parthenios, and Kromna, and Aigialos, and lofty Erythini. And Odios and Epistrophos led the Alizones from far away Alybe, where is the birthplace of silver." Commenting thereon, Dr. Leaf says (p. 278): "The first thing that strikes us here . . . is the desire of the poet to give full information. Every line is packed with it; names of towns, rivers, mountains, and tribes. And each paragraph names a natural product of the region—here only in the whole catalogue." But surely both the Greek and Trojan catalogues abound in references to "towns, rivers, mountains, and tribes." In the section quoted by Dr. Leaf it is true that mules and silver are named and famed, but that is the frequent manner of Homer! Elsewhere the vineyards of Epidauros (B 561) and of Arne (B 506); the meadows Hiliartos (B 503); the abounding flocks in Arcadian Orchomenos (B 506); the silverware of Sidon (ψ 743); the wines of Lemnos (H 473); the gold of Mycenae (H 179. γ 304); the pre-eminent wealth of Egyptian Thebes (δ 126); Crete, "a fair land and a rich in the midst of the wine-dark sea" (τ 172). And to take up the Trojan Catalogue, there are the fine sorrel steeds from "bright Arisbe" which is high praise in Homer (B 837); this passage is quite as favorable as the reference to mules; and Zeleia must be a favored land having "men of substance" (B 825) and there is fertile Larisa, "deep soiled" (B 842).

For his purpose, Dr. Leaf would invoke the authority of Homer; so would we for ours. Homer mirrors no typical economic pressure in "fertile Achaia" (Δ 770). The land as a whole is able to support the population. Life is remarkably simple. Pastoral pursuits largely predominate. There is ample evidence of general economic sufficiency and of economic wealth. Riches and rich men are frequently mentioned. Hospitality to the suppliant and stranger

is open-handed. The Homeric folk "live well." This seems by no means true only of the upper classes; of course "the poor are always with us," then as now. And, although Greece under changed economic and impoverished soil conditions had become agriculturally poor in later ages, we especially point out that in his time—note in his day—Homer (who of course was not contemporary with the Trojan War) tells us of "deep-soiled Phthia, the nurse of men" (A 154); of Arcadian Orchomenos "abounding in flocks" (B 606); Minyan Orchomenos is one of the richest of cities (I 382); Arne (B 506), Epidauros (B 561), and Histiaia (B 537) are "rich in vineyards"; Iton is "the mother of flocks" (B 679); "wealthy Corinth" (B 570) is mentioned, and recognized as such by Thucydides (i. 13) (separatists of course tell us this is a "late passage"); Mycenae is "rich in gold" (H 179); Achaian Argos is "the richest of lands" (I 141); in sandy Pylos are "men abounding in flocks and kine" (I 154); in that dear home-land of Achilles "goodly flocks are to be had for the harrying" and "chestnut horses," too (I 405); the fat plain of "lovely Kalydon" is spoken of by the old knight Phoenix" (I 579); how frequently and reverently "Earth the grain-giver" is alluded to, the "bounteous earth"; "the deep crop" is specified (Δ 559) and "the deep corn field" (B 147). Thetis speaks of "a very fruitful field" (Σ 438); especially, the scenes depicted on the Shield of Achilles (Σ) portray smiling plenty; Ephyra is "a fruitful land" (B 328); Telemachus observes "a wide plain wherein is lotus in great plenty" and grain, in Sparta (δ 603); Dulichium is "a land rich in grain" (ξ 335); Telemachus on account of his beauty might be taken by a stranger for "some rich man's son" (σ 220); the rich formed a class. "Pelias dwelt in wide Iolchos and was rich in flocks" (λ 255); the old Laertes has "a fruitful vineyard" (ω 221); "let peace and wealth abundant be their portion," says Zeus to Athene, regarding the Ithacans whom he is to reconcile (ω 487). The natural inference drawn from this Homeric testimony as to the economic status of Greece at about the time of the Trojan War is that "expansion toward the east" was not "a matter of life and death to Greece"; there was no "economic necessity" for that war. Dr. Leaf asserts that there was (pp. 316, 326). If he is right, then Homer is simply

ironical in those passages of exquisite beauty. It does no violence to high probability to say, as we do, that the reason the Dorians came and conquered is that the land was economically attractive.

The Homeric Greeks are not hardy sailors generally. In γ 168 Nestor relates that "late in our track came Menelaos of the fair hair who found us in Lesbos, considering about the long voyage whether we should go seaward of craggy Chios, by the isle of Psyria, keeping the Isle upon our left, or inside Chios past windy Mimas." It is a momentous question whether they should directly cross the Aegean Sea with Psyria intervening, from Chios to Euboea (it is, say, eighty-five English miles from Chios, and about seventy-two English miles from Pysria to Cyme in Euboea), or return home nearer land by a route more than twice as long, but through the Sporades, along the coast of Crete, and to their destination. They invoke the counsel of heaven. The god "bade us cleave a path across the middle Sea to Euboea that we might flee the swiftest way from sorrow." On their arrival they offer a sacrifice "for joy that we had measured out so great a stretch of sea." Agamemnon takes the longer route (δ 514). The Greeks in the *Odyssey*—peculiarly largely a book of compulsory travels—when going by sea lay up for the night unless compelled to travel. These views are confirmed by Seymour¹ in his *Homeric Age*, a work remarkable for its knowledge, sagacity, and sanity. And consider the small size of the Homeric ship: "Merchant ships have twenty oarsmen [ι 322]. . . . The ships of Achilles and of Protesilaus had each fifty oarsmen [π 170, B 719]; the Phaeacian ship which brought Odysseus to his home had fifty-two men (θ 48) . . . the ships of the Boeotian contingent bore each one hundred and twenty men [B 510, cf. Thuc. i. 10]."² And Homer is consistent: No ship is portrayed upon the Shield of Achilles. The Leaf-Ramsay assumption, then, that the object and result of the Trojan War was to secure to the Greeks a notable commerce in—to them—the dangerous and distant Black Sea is the more unreasonable to us.

But if the strong evidence of the *Odyssey* be rejected, recall that the farthest removed Greek colony known to the *Iliad* is Rhodes (B 655); this is the view also of the cautious and penetrating D.B.

¹ Chap. xi, pp. 305 ff. ² Seymour, *Homeric Age*, chap. xi, p. 308.

Monro.¹ And Monro,² in criticizing Heyne's interpretation that Homer's viewpoint was in Asia Minor with reference to Homer's "holy Euboea," remarks: "This is to suppose a geographical knowledge scarcely possible at the time." And Rhodes is safely reached, being comparatively near the Grecian mainland; intervening are several links in the chains formed by those enchanting isles the Cyclades, the Sporades. Plainly no "new era," no "new world" in the form of "Greek expansion to the Euxine," is reflected in the *Iliad*; no "national consciousness" of such is mirrored there. Had Homer laid "the great Greek epic" at Troy in expression of such consciousness, he would have glorified that expansion as did Vergil the grand destiny of Italy.

Possibly Leaf and Ramsay infer an Ionian Homer in the eighth century who is looking far backward. But there was no "Ionian" Homer. Hogarth observes: "The epics, it has often been remarked, show not only no knowledge of a Hellenic Asia, but also none of a Dorian Peloponnesus. They were probably anterior in original composition to the establishment of both these states of things."³ With his scientific method Hogarth adduces archaeological evidence for his conclusion; and see his p. 43.

Greek cities, as such, were founded in Ionia as early as the last half of the eleventh century B.C., but there is no evidence of any Greek commerce in the basin of the Euxine, such as Leaf and Ramsay suppose, until the eighth century. Why such a long interval? A potent reason is that probably not until then were ships built sufficiently seaworthy to navigate the Hellespont. Respecting this matter at the time of the Trojan War, clear testimony comes down to us through the gray mists of ages: (a) In B 843 reference is had to the Thracian Allies of Troy "that the strong stream of Hellespont shutteth in." And the same stream shut out the Greeks. We have observed their natural backwardness as sailors, and their small ships. (b) Homer, furthermore, plainly implies the commercial impracticability of the entrance to the Pontus, in the *Odyssey* (μ 60 ff.). Only the mythical ship Argo under the guidance of Hera, "for love of Jason," passes the Rocks Wandering: "One ship only of all that fare by sea hath passed that way,"

¹ Article on "Homer," *Enc. Brit.*, 11th ed., XIII, 629.

² Notes on *Iliad* ii. 535.

³ Ionia and the East, Lecture VI, p. 104.

"no ship of men ever escapes that come hither." Those same causes, "the strong stream of Hellespont," and the Rocks Wandering, obviously shut out the Trojans, too. Dr. Leaf (chap. viii) with fine intelligence details the great natural difficulties the Hellespont offers even to present-day navigation. Examine a good map of Northwestern Asia, especially between the Halys and the western seas. Note the considerable number of river valleys. Through these valleys came the mules and oxen freighters from and to the Troad. From that hinterland great roads led in "historical" times to the far-away lower valley of the Euphrates. It was an overland, not a maritime, trade which Troy had with those who became its Asian allies. Is not this the natural impression obtained from the *Iliad*? No Trojan ship is mentioned in Homer, except those of Paris, which voyaged in the Aegean and Mediterranean. Of course Greek, Phoenician, and Phaeacian ships are referred to. Homer speaks of the Phoenicians, "those mariners renowned," "greedy merchantmen" (ο 415), but there is not even a hint that these enterprising seamen have any Black Sea trade, though in a remote antiquity they penetrated into the western Mediterranean. It is specifically stated (ψ 743) that the Phoenicians visited Lemnos prior to the Trojan War. Thus they were near the Hellespont, the entrance to that "trade." If Dr. Leaf is right in thinking (p. 294) that cutlery was probably manufactured on the shore of the Black Sea and "brought to Troy" in the time of Achilles, "in Paphlagonian and Halizonian bottoms," silverware must have come too, for there was Alybe "where is the birthplace of silver" (B 858). But the Lemnians obtain their silver cup from far-away Sidon (ψ 743). Here was an opportunity to mention the silverware of Alybe had any such reached the Aegean Sea in "Paphlagonian or Halizonian" ships. Of course the Paphlagonians had ships—their very name seems to imply it, but such kept out of the Hellespont, and for the same natural reason the Greeks and Phoenicians did. Dr. Leaf (p. 295) conjectures that Baltic amber reached "most Mycenaean settlements" in the "second millennium B.C." via the Euxine. This is highly improbable. Amber is mentioned but twice by Homer (ο 460; σ 296), neither time in connection with the mainland of Asia Minor. Mommsen says that "the oldest route" of the amber trade from the Baltic

was via the Po valley to Greece as well as to Italy."¹ The route has been traced by which the amber found at Mycenae was brought from the Baltic.²

Had the Homeric Greeks secured a commercial empire in the Euxine, "a new world" due to taking "fair-towered Troy," probably no blank in Greek history would have occurred. Economic advantages, such as Dr. Leaf sees as a result of the sacking of Ilios, would have reacted favorably upon "Argos, pastureland of horses, and Achaia, home of fair women." Troy was not a stimulus but a depression. The minstrel in the *Odyssey* sings of "the pitiful return of the Achaiaans" (α 327). Nestor and his companions coming back from Troy took "the swiftest way from sorrow" (γ 175). In ω 14 ff., on "the mead of Asphodel where dwell the souls, the phantoms of men outworn," Achilles speaks of "the land of the Trojans where we Achaiaans suffered affliction," implying an adversity extending beyond the close of the *Iliad*. Homer ascribes Achaiaan troubles coming after the fall of Troy to the gods. The Greek poets and Herodotus, especially, see in the adversity of the proud, the spirit of Nemesis. Of the Achaiaans: "In no wise were they all discreet or just" (γ 134). "Many of them met with an ill faring by reason of the wrath of the grey-eyed goddess" (γ 135) against whom they had sinned (ε 109). That testimony historically reflects national depression. Instead of martial glory—implied by Leaf and Ramsay—a mournful dirge. Helen was restored, but the Greeks still "suffered affliction."

In contrast with "that evil Ilios, never to be named" (τ 596), note the effect of the Persian War. Marathon, Salamis, Plataea and Mycale, thrill "the national consciousness." A "new era" is evolved to the marvel of all succeeding ages. The influence upon the Greek genius is profound. Within a brief period—as history measures time—the spirit of Hellas bursts forth in the drama, the fine arts, architecture, eloquence, philosophy, and science and immortalizes them. Recall the tremendous impetus the Punic Wars had upon Italy. Their impulsion lasted for centuries and erected those wide arches of empire that spanned the world from the Nile to the Clyde and from the Atlantic to the Euphrates, when Earth became "veiled with the haughty shadow" of the Eternal

¹ *Hist. Rome*, I, chap. x.

² Ridgeway, *EAG*, I, 359 ff.

City. But after Troy, that old Grecian motherland becomes wrapped in a night of almost pitiless darkness followed by that resplendent Ionian morning, whose "rosy fingered dawn" is observed, not in the lands of the Euxine, but upon those trans-Aegean shores.

If Greek expansion to the Pontus sprang from the Trojan War, how singular that, apparently, no word thereof was transmitted to posterity by the keen and versatile intellect of Ionia, which would have attributed the chief sources of its commercial power to those names which are enshrined in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* forever.

The Leaf-Ramsay theory can find no support in Herodotus, who ranks second only to Homer (the latter is the true "father of history") in the chronicles of Hellas.

Thucydides expressly states (i. 12) that prior to any Greek colonization after the Trojan War, three influences supervened: (a) the Dorians conquered the Peloponnesos "in the eightieth year after the war"; (b) then "a considerable time elapsed before Hellas became finally settled"; and (c) "after a while, however, she began to send out colonies." Where to? "The Athenians colonized Ionia and most of the islands; the Peloponnesians the greater part of Italy and Sicily, and various places in Hellas. These colonies were all founded after the Trojan War." At least one hundred and forty years elapsed between the fall of Troy and the first colonization thereafter according to Thucydides. (The word "Ionia" in this article includes Aeolis where proper.)

Were Leaf and Ramsay right, it is passing strange that the great dramatic and lyric poets of Greece in their known works, are as mute as the grave. Dramatic insight, and reverence for those heroes of old would have shed some luster upon Homeric Achaiaian triumphs—whether martial or peaceful—beyond the Hellespont. The Theban Pindar praises Athens, that "shining violet crowned City of Song." The *Ion* of Euripides maintains the glorious *autochthony* of the Ionic race. In the grand and somber tragedy of the *Agamemnon*, Aeschylus casts a halo upon Troy. But none of the immortal names in the classical period of Hellas depict Euxine argosies. Instead, the aftermath of Troy in Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, as well as in Homer, is the visitation of the spirit of Nemesis.

To mention two or three samples of the great weight of modern criticism in relation to "Greek expansion to the Euxine": Hogarth and Jebb¹ state: "A new period in the history of the Troad begins with the foundation of the Greek settlements. The earliest and most important of these were Aeolic. Lesbos and Cyme in Aeolis seem to have been the chief points from which the Aeolic colonies worked their way into the Troad. Some were in the hands of the Aeolians as early as the tenth century." Say two hundred years after the Trojan War!

As to the Propontis and the Euxine: The greater and more ancient Greek cities in that part of the world were, as it is well known, Cyzicus, Heraclea, Pontica, Sinope, Trapezus, Olbai, Chersonesus, and Panticapaeum. No scholar assigns the Hellenic foundation of any of them before the first half of the eighth century B.C. Recall that not the cities of European Greece but those of Ionia were almost the sole founders of Greek colonies on the shores of the Black Sea. It is an incontestible fact that Miletos was the great and prolific mother of such settlements; this clearly connects their foundation—that "new era" in the history of Hellas—with times long after the Trojan War. A considerable commerce did not precede colonization by centuries.

Homer mentions Miletos in B 868 as belonging to "barbarous speaking Karians"; and Chios in γ 171, but merely as an island, not stating even that it is settled (the only passage in the 27,600 lines of Homer naming Chios).

Bury² remarks regarding Greek colonization of the Euxine: "But the work of colonization beyond the gate of the Bosphorous can hardly have been begun until the gate itself was secured . . . in the first part of the seventh century," when Chalcedon and Byzantium were founded by the Magarians. Five hundred years after Homeric Troy!

[Mr. Maury is a business man of Seattle who, like Grote, Leaf, and Shewan, finds rest and inspiration in Greek studies. He has a fine library and a surprising command of the literature. His studies, he wrote me some years ago, had filled his hours with enchantment. There can be no finer appeal for the classics than the fact that such men find in them a rest and a solace. Mr. Maury in his letters showed such a grasp of all the problems that I urged him to prepare the foregoing paper.—JOHN A. SCOTT.]

¹ Article on "Troy," *Enc. Brit.*, 11th ed., XXVII, 314.

² *Hist. Greece* (1912), chap. ii, p. 90.